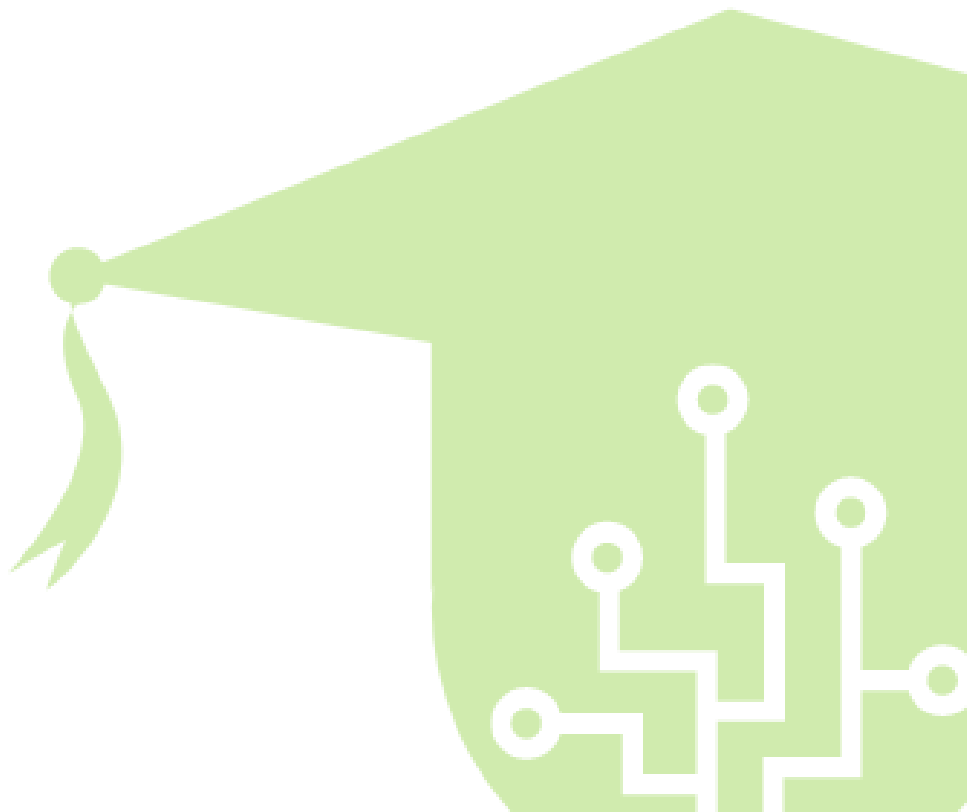# L2D

MEDIA LITERACY COMPETENCES FOR YOUTH WORKERS

SOCIAL EDUCATION: The correct behavior on social media

MODULE SOCIAL EDUCATION
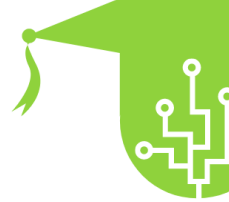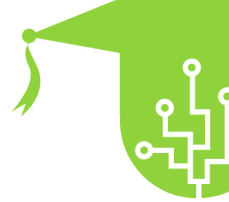
Title :	SOCIAL EDUCATION: The correct behavior on social media
Key words :	social education, media education, social networks, social media, nomophobia, cyberbulling
Prepared by .	Demostene Centro Studi per la Promozione dello Sviluppo Umano
Language :	English
Objectives :	- useful definitions for understanding the difference between social networks and social media - understand the dangers of a lack of online social education - understand how social media and social networks influence our identity construction - understand that social media can be a vehicle for hate - understand that smartphones and technological tools could bring to addiction - possible tips for dealing with cyberbullying - possible tips to avoid nomophobia
Learning Outcomes :	

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Content Development :	1. SOCIAL EDUCATION
	
	  1.1. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL EDUCATION
	    What is Social Education?

It is a field of study that analyses cultural interactions and behaviours within virtual communities in order to promote mutual tolerance in the use of social media.

Social education aims to promote social wellbeing and improve the quality of the population in general, with particular reference to digital latecomers, optimising the socialisation processes of these groups.

The main competences related to social education are:

- Observing contexts, behaviours and attitudes that identify individuals or groups experiencing imbalances or marginalisation;
- Making contact with the same people in order to gather information about their lives, their problems, their relationships, in order to identify the best strategy in each case.
- Planning educational strategies that increase participation and, of course, lead to an improvement in the quality of life of the people concerned.

If we analyse the etymology of "social education", we can easily see that it is composed of
- social", recalling the establishment of human relationships;
- The word "education" should not be understood as a set of compulsory rules, dictated or imposed for no reason, but as a small code of conduct to establish healthy relationships and, in our case, to avoid the dangers of the Internet.

So we can define social education as the dissemination of good manners to learn how to build good relationships online.

1.2. DEFINITION OF MEDIA EDUCATION

Media literacy is a teaching subject that was born with the aim of providing people with all the necessary tools to better understand the dynamics and messages offered by the media, and to rework them in an independent and critical way. Today, it's necessary to teach people to better manage their relationship with social media, to educate and train

them on "what and how to post" or how to recognise "fake news". The use of the Internet thanks to smartphones offers infinite potential for learning, but also risks linked to the "superficial use of these tools". "Digital Immigrants" are most at risk because they are not used to dealing with the unwritten rules of a virtual world they do not belong to. They often don't know the main communication systems and don't have the ability to process new messages in order to offer their own contribution to the community, remaining passive elements.

1.3. SOCIAL MEDIA

In Latin, 'medium' means instrument. The media (TV, radio, newspapers) are therefore the tools by which content is delivered to the public. In traditional media, the transmission of information is unidirectional: the user receives the information passively, without interaction or sharing. The innovation of social media has made this mechanism bidirectional: by adding a social component, they have enabled users to 'participate' in the construction of information as part of a continuous exchange.

In 2009, Professors Kaplan and Haenlein provided a definition of social media: "Social media are a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0 that enable the creation and sharing of user-generated content." Social media are therefore *software or applications* that allow anyone to share content and reach a global audience.

The professors also classified six types of social media:

-Blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter)
-Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, which is the most confusing on the subject)
-Gaming virtual worlds (e.g. Age of Empire)
-Social virtual worlds (e.g. SecondLife)
-Collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia)
-Content communities that share multimedia material (e.g. Youtube)

1.4. SOCIAL NETWORKS

A social network is a community of people who share a common interest, even though they may not

know each other. A trade union, a political party, a cultural or sports club are examples of traditional social networks. A social network is a social structure, and therefore arises from social relationships and interactions. Online social networks have emerged more recently and are the transposition of the same social interactions into a virtual sphere. We can say that social networks are not 'used' by people but 'experienced' in order to cultivate interests and share goals.

1.5. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORK
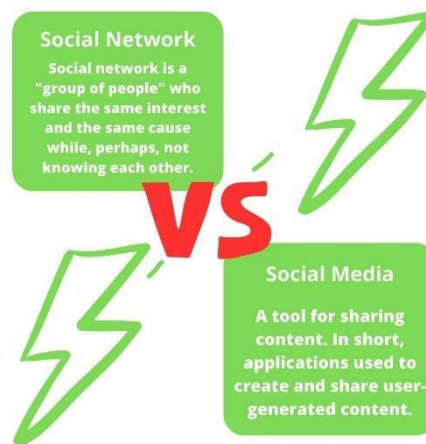
The difference between social media and social networks can be summed up by borrowing the tool of equivalence from mathematical language:

social media : instrument = social network : people

As we have seen, a social network is the result of interaction between people - both offline and online - while a social media network is nothing more than a medium through which these personal relationships can be cultivated. Technology has made it increasingly easy to share and produce content on social media, bridging distances and allowing people to form virtual communities around a common interest.
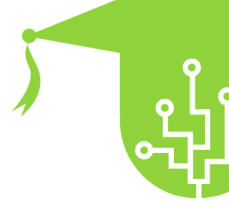
2. DIGITAL IGNORANCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES
Digital illiteracy is often associated with the demographics of online users. "Digital Immigrants" are

mostly adults and are often the first victims of digital illiteracy.

But what is digital ignorance? It can be defined not only as the inability to use the available technological tools properly, but as a condition that encompasses every aspect of online life. Social media directly affects people and their identity.

The adult's approach, often with a view to preserving an identity constructed offline, creates a constant resistance to change. False beliefs about 'how better things used to be' or 'how difficult it is to learn' lead him to reject the digital world or, on the contrary, to have a hyper-positive dynamic towards it.

Digital ignorance not only affects other people, but often has personal consequences, denying important opportunities for relationships, work or simply leisure. Here are some of the consequences:

- Online relational incapacity, which limits the ability to identify potentially annoying or dangerous contacts;
- Digital rudeness;
- superficiality in the technical management of one's profile, especially in the basic privacy settings that protect the person;
in the case of adult-child relationships, rejection of technology increases the generation gap and communication opportunities;
- self-censorship of online communication corresponds to self-exclusion from many personal and professional opportunities that cannot be realised elsewhere.

2.1. SOCIAL MEDIA AND IDENTITY BUILDING

The genesis of networked identity moves in two directions: the first refers to the production here and now of one of many possible 'impersonations' in a given 'social situation' (online or offline), and the second enables recognition and thus aggregation within a group on the basis of some affinity.

As Sonia Livingstone writes:

Creating a profile is not just a matter of individual choice. Rather, it is an operation that implies a social orientation towards others, whether in the choice of the site (which depends on what one's friends are already using), in the way one presents

oneself (since many claim to upload content that their friends might like), or in the setting up of the profile itself (often done with the help of friends who already frequent the site).

The construction of identity online is thus an expression of the social dimension of the self rather than the intimate and personal one.

Through the use of texts, images, videos, memes and other multimedia materials, young people in particular create profiles of themselves that in some way 'impersonate' their subjective and social identities, revealing, consciously or subconsciously, aspects of identity that speak to their desire to belong to a group on the one hand, and to distinguish themselves from it on the other. In short, it is a multiplicity of discursive practices through which their existences are given substance in the very act in which they are 'written'.

2.2. CYBERBULLING

One of the greatest experts in Social Education, Rosa Giuffré, writes in her book:

Cyberbullying is an aggressive, bullying or harassing act carried out via telematic tools (text messages, e-mails, websites, chats, etc.). The basic concept originates from the offline environment and from the term "bullying", which refers to an act of harassment between peers in a group context, and which can take the form of direct physical or verbal violence, or indirect acts of slander, exclusion, humiliation, actions aimed at putting psychological pressure on vulnerable and weak people in order to isolate them from the group. When these actions are transferred online, they become cyberbullying. This leap from the offline to the online environment has actually aggravated the problem, because today the bully can hide under false identities, his psychological pressure on the victim can continue 24 hours a day, even when the victim is at home, where she will obviously no longer feel safe, but always in a state of fear and threat.

Cyberbullying takes many forms: insults, threats, but also manipulation, defamation, appropriation of the victim's identity, exclusion.

Unfortunately, cyberbullying does not only affect the youngest, especially after the shutdown. More and more adults are using abusive language and aggressive comments. This is an example of how easy it is to spread hate online.

But how can we defend ourselves against cyberbullying? Rosa Giuffrè suggests a few tricks:

- Block and report users both to social platforms and to the competent authorities;
- protect your accounts with strong passwords
- be careful about the content we publish on our online profiles (even in "private" chats)
- avoid contact with users we do not know (or at least deal with them very carefully). In fact, remember that many scams, such as romantic scams, originate online;
- always and immediately take screenshots of the cyberbullying you suffer, as they will serve as evidence and make the work of the authorities easier.

2.3. NOMOPHOBIA

Nomophobia is a word that was coined in the UK in 2008 and stands for No Mobile Phone Phobia, so it is easy to see that it is the fear of being without a mobile phone and internet connection. Everyday life is now interspersed with instant messages and alerts, and the risk of becoming addicted to them is increasing. What are the symptoms of nomophobia? Firstly, anxiety and stress, but in the worst cases, withdrawal can even lead to physical symptoms such as panic attacks and tachycardia. To avoid becoming addicted to your smartphone and falling into nomophobia, you need to take a few steps:

- Do not use your smartphone when you do not need it. It sounds trivial, but just leave it on a bedside table away from the dining room when you're eating, put it in your pocket or purse when you're with friends, don't hold it ready to answer a few messages while you're watching a film.
- Do not check social networks compulsively. How often, perhaps out of boredom, do we update our Instagram or Facebook feed every few minutes? It is a bit like opening the fridge when you are hungry,
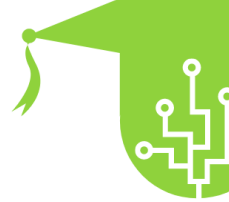
even though you know exactly what is inside. In this case, it is the apps themselves that come to our aid: we can control how much time we spend with them, and some even allow us to set a maximum time limit.

- Set aside moments each day to do something away from your smartphone (and your computer, too). For example, some people devote a few hours a day to reading a book, doing handicrafts or learning to play a musical instrument, and during this time they try not to check their phone's notifications for any reason.

Unfortunately, the most serious cases require professional help.

3. YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

An Italian survey, sponsored by Telefono Azzurro and Doxa Kids, highlighted the limitations perceived by 611 children in terms of their awareness when using social media. The survey asked the children to identify three negative aspects of their experience on digital social networks. The results showed that a major problem associated with excessive use of digital technologies is distraction from learning and the 'real world'. Children also perceive a lack of personal contact in a world where relationships are increasingly rarefied. Another negative aspect is the illusory dimension of the number of one's contacts: people often believe that they have many friends, only to find that they are dealing with strangers. Social networking also has a negative impact on people's perception of themselves and others, and is often a source of addiction. 66% of respondents to the survey said they had personally been exposed to unpleasant or unexpected content, including images and videos with violent, racist or sexist content.

3.1. HOW PLATFORMS INFLUENCE YOUNG PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR

A study by Have your say revealed the positive aspects of digital communities in the eyes of young people. In fact, the respondents associated social
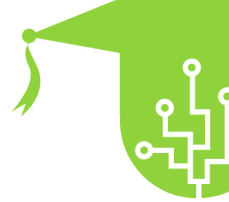
media with enjoyable activities such as staying in touch with other people, sharing interests and leisure activities. In 18% of cases, they are a tool to overcome loneliness. Social media is also a tool to stay informed and learn new things, a virtual place to express one's identity or build one's own. The other side of the coin, however, is that young people are now inextricably linked to their online tools. The task of schools, families and all those who work closely with young people is therefore undoubtedly to raise awareness, to stress the importance of living one's life in the real world, giving due importance to everyday life and social relationships, without taking what happens virtually too seriously.

The risk, over and above the dangers of the Internet, is to miss out on valuable opportunities that a social network can hardly offer.

3.2. ABOUT TIK TOK AND GENERATION Z: ALGORITHM, ISSUES, ADDICTION AND SUGGESTED SOLUTION

Have you ever tried to find a restaurant online? You probably used apps like Tripadvisor or Google Maps, read reviews on Google and ended up booking a meal.

For Generation Z, this is no longer the case: the very young prefer to entrust their searches to Instagram and, increasingly, to an addictive social networking site like Tik Tok. The fastest growing social network in recent years, Tik Tok is fast, clear and fragmented. Instead of reading long reviews, users can watch short videos sharing their experiences of a restaurant, product or concert. Tik Tok's algorithm makes it possible to quickly find content that interests you, without having to select like on Google. While Meta bases its social media on the user's relationships, Tik Tok shapes content around the user's identity, tastes and needs. It is an immersive, all-encompassing experience based on far more pervasive profiling.

A major problem is that young people are also increasingly using Tik Tok as a source of information. While Google ranks the results of a search according to the authority of the sources, Tik Tok suggests news based on likes and popularity.

Information for consumption, in practice. A recent study by NewsGuard, a site that monitors disinformation on the Internet, found that one in five Tik Tok search results contain false information. The study analysed the top 20 search results on 27 different topics, from '2022 election' to 'mRNA vaccine'. Speaking of vaccines, the Asian social network is full of videos of do-it-yourself remedies for Covid-19.

This platform has three winning aspects:

- Tik Tok's short videos are beating the competition. They are perfectly suited to the fragmented approach to knowledge of Generation Z, which is not looking for the encyclopaedic knowledge of the Boomers and Millennials, whose Google approach still recalls them;

- Until now, the continent of the Net has been made up of several nations: Google searches, YouTube videos, Facebook conversations and hypnotic clips on Tik Tok. Today, the continent is crumbling and a new geography is emerging. Google and Meta have not fully grasped the changes taking place and are clearly chasing Tik Tok, which is instead driving the media transformation of young people;

- The algorithm is increasingly invisible. If Meta's socials are still largely tied to the people we follow, Tik Tok tends to follow interests, and that is enough to keep us glued to the Chinese app's small screen for hours on end.

It is the algorithm that chooses what to show to the user, based on the virality of the content.

But what is behind Tik Tok? What happens in a young person's unconscious when they use it?

Tik Tok's success is based on the theory of gratification: if the user's most important needs are met, he or she is more likely to use the app again in the future. It is precisely this feature of Tik Tok that makes the majority of its users young and very young. However, the psychological impact of this platform is not fully understood.

An article in the Wall Street Journal likened the TikTok feed to an endless candy store, a carousel of videos that produces a constant dopamine rush. It's easy to get sucked into the app and become addicted. According to an article in the journal
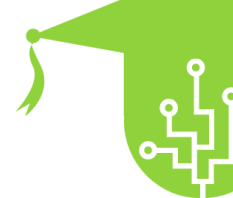
Addictive Behaviors, excessive use of the app "is associated with addiction-like behaviours that can potentially have a negative impact on the daily lives of those affected". The most obvious symptoms of TikTok addiction occur when the user becomes nervous, irritable, anxious, or experiences strong feelings of sadness when deprived of access to the social networking site (withdrawal), and the user's attempts to control participation on the site are unsuccessful.

There are some simple precautions you can take to avoid becoming addicted to TikTok:

-Keep track of how much time you spend on TikTok to see if it's becoming a problem.

-Stop following content creators who don't add any real value to your life. Some may post content that is entertaining in the moment, but has limited entertainment value overall.

-Set a time limit so that you don't check TikTok before noon or after 8pm. Of course, you can choose different times depending on your personal habits and goals.

- Find something else to do with your time. It's easy to become addicted to this type of dopamine stimulating activity if you have nothing else positive to do.

TikTok can provide a high level of social status and positive reinforcement, creating a unique form of addiction. Receiving a 'like' or a positive comment on the content you share instantly boosts validation and self-esteem in your mind. You should never feel guilty about enjoying the attention, but it's important to recognise when it starts to take precedence over other aspects of your life.

3.3. BAD PRACTICE: THE KIA CHALLENGE ON TIKTOK

14 serious accidents, a surge in car thefts and 8 deaths. These are the consequences of the challenge launched on TikTok under the name Kia Callenge. It all started in July 2022, when videos began to proliferate on the social site explaining how to steal numerous car models from Hyundai and Kia using tools as simple as a USB cable.

The carmakers had to recall 8 million vehicles for

	urgent security updates. TikTok's algorithm, fuelled by the virality of the content, continued to maximise clicks on the theft videos, fuelling a vicious cycle based solely on monetising views. The first to launch the Kia challenge were a group of teenagers called the Kia Boyz. They posted a video on Tik Tok showing how to start and steal a car with little effort. From there, they took the challenge to the entire online community. The impact of this challenge in the US was measured as follows +35% in car thefts in Norfolk, Virginia; 460 Kia and Hyundai vehicles stolen since the beginning of the year compared to 63 in the same period last year in St. Paul, Minnesota; +400% in Kia and Hyundai thefts in St. Louis, Missouri. In October 2022, the most serious consequence: 4 teenagers, aged 19, 17, 16 and 14, were killed in Buffalo, New York, in a crash involving a stolen Kia, which authorities said was "most likely related to the Kia Challenge". This is just one of countless examples of how TikTok and other social media can be a vehicle for bad and harmful behaviour, both to oneself and to others.
Glossary :	SOCIAL EDUCATION: subject of study that analyzes within virtual communities, cultural interactions and behaviors in order to promote mutual tolerance during the use of social media MEDIA EDUCATION: subject of teaching that is born and developed with the aim of providing people with all the tools necessary to better understand the dynamics and messages offered by the media and to re-elaborate them independently, in a critical manner SOCIAL NETWORK: group of people who share the same interest and the same cause while, perhaps, not knowing each other SOCIAL MEDIA: a tool for producing and sharing contents CYBERBULLING: Aggressive, defamatory or harassing acts committed by means of telematic tools

	NOMOPHOBIA: a pathology which consists in the fear of being disconnected from the network PROSUMER: The word prosumer is a combination of the English terms 'consumer' and 'producer'. It is intended to describe the type of user who does not simply take a passive role as a mere consumer of goods and services, but who actively participates in their production and/or improvement, as well as in spreading awareness of them to other potential users.
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Resources (videos, reference link)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lVDtvluB4k https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HffWFd_6bJ0 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soHn6t_jjIw